

TRANSPORTATION UPDATE

DULLES RAIL

Plans to extend Metrorail through Tysons Corner and out the Dulles corridor to Loudoun County continue to gain momentum, clearing several critical hurdles last year.

More than \$210 million in federal funding already has been allocated at my request for the project and additional funding is included in the president's proposed FY 2007 budget.

The Metropolitan Washington Airports Authority's (MWAA) recent proposal to take over the project and build it seamlessly rather than in two phases also is welcome news. MWAA's greater participation in the project would guarantee that revenues generated along the toll road would be 100 percent devoted to improvements in the corridor and not be diverted to other transportation projects in the state, which could happen if the toll road were leased to a private company as some have proposed. The state will make the ultimate decision on how the Dulles rail project proceeds.

For too long extending mass transit out the Dulles corridor has only been discussed. We are now on the brink of making it happen.



I-66 / ROUTE 29 INTERCHANGE

Another positive development in the I-66 corridor is Congress's commitment to set aside more than \$33 million for improvements to the I-66 / Route 29 interchange in Gainesville.

Back-ups at this interchange in both the morning and evening are fast becoming some of the worst in the region and are exacerbated when there is an event at Nissan Pavilion.

The state has committed funding for improvements to the interchange and this additional money from Congress should help advance the project. Meanwhile, work on widening I-66 from Route 234 / Manassas to Route 29 / Gainesville is progressing and should be completed by 2008.



I-66 WIDENING

My call to widen westbound I-66 inside the Beltway now has the blessing of Virginia's governor and plans for spot improvements to ease congestion are moving forward. While such upgrades are a positive step, it is critical that efforts to add a continuous new westbound lane through the corridor to the Dulles connector remain a top priority.

A seamless, new outbound lane is critical to any plan to keeping traffic moving in our region. Aside from increasing capacity, a third lane benefits neighborhoods near I-66 because it will take cars off Lee Highway, Old Dominion Drive, Route 123 and other residential streets. Emergency response vehicles also will be able to get to accidents more quickly. Working with my colleagues in the House and the Senate, I have secured more than \$30 million for this project to date and I am committed to seeking additional funds in the future.

It is important to note that an additional lane can be added within the state's existing right-of-way, meaning the expansion can be done without taking any homes. The state should take all steps necessary to expedite the construction of a new lane running the entire length of the corridor.



SYNCHRONIZING TRAFFIC SIGNALS

I remain committed to working with the Virginia Department of Transportation (VDOT) and the Federal Highway Administration (FHWA) to install the best technology possible along the Route 7, Route 50 and Route 28 corridors to ensure that traffic moves with less stop-and-go.

VDOT is well aware of my frustration over the lack of progress it has made in synchronizing in real time the traffic signals along Route 7 with the federal funding I secured for the pilot project. After months of delay, I asked the FHWA in November to step in and review VDOT's efforts. I also asked that all the federal money appropriated for the project be entirely accounted for and that no money set aside for similar work on Route 50 and Route 28 be released to VDOT until it resolves the problem it is having along the Route 7 corridor.

This is an important project to northern Virginia commuters and I am deeply disappointed in VDOT's inability to implement this common sense approach to keeping traffic flowing.

